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Joint work plan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains the joint work plan for the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the year 2000, as well as an assessment of the implementation of the work plan for 1999. It is submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session and to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-sixth session, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1999/41. The annex contains an excerpt from the report of a workshop, jointly convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Fund for Women from 26 to 28 May 1999, on gender integration into the human rights system.

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I. Introduction

1. Based on resolution 39/5 of 31 March 1995 of the Commission on the Status of Women and resolution 1997/43 of 11 April 1997 of the Commission on Human Rights, a joint work plan has been prepared annually for the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (see, for example, E/CN.6/1999/2, paras. 61-73). In resolution 1999/41 of 26 April 1999, the Commission on Human Rights welcomed the cooperation and coordination between the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights aimed at mainstreaming women's human rights, such as the joint work plan, requested that the plan continue to reflect all aspects of work under way and identify where obstacles/impediments and areas for further collaboration exist, and that it be made available to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-sixth session and to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session. The present report has been prepared in accordance with that request.

II. Assessment of the implementation of the current work plan

2. During the implementation of the current joint work plan (E/CN.6/1999/2, paras. 61-73, see also E/CN.4/1999/67/Add.1), the exchange of information between the Office of the High Commissioner, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women continued. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women addressed the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fifth session during its consideration of item 12 (Integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective). She also participated in a panel discussion moderated by the High Commissioner to mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In the course of the year, the Special Adviser met several times with the High Commissioner and with the Deputy High Commissioner to discuss, *inter alia*, preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", to be held from 5 to 9 June 2000. Staff of the Division participated in the eleventh meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies held at the United Nations Office at Geneva and presented the results of the workshop on gender integration into the human rights system, which was held at Geneva from 26 to 28 May 1999 (see annex). The Division facilitated the participation of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women at the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights and in the panel discussion concerning the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It also facilitated the participation of a vice-chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at the Commission's fifty-fifth session. The Division provided its training materials on the Convention to the Office of the High Commissioner and suggested possible trainers on the human rights of women for the Office's training activities on reporting under international human rights instruments. The Office of the High Commissioner suggested names of senior judges and magistrates for participation in the Division's judicial colloquium on the application of international human rights law at the domestic level. The colloquium was convened to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and was held at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 27 to 29 October 1999.

3. The Division and the Office of the High Commissioner updated their web sites (un.org/womenwatch/daw and unhchr.ch) to facilitate access to information related to the human rights of women and to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. This included, in particular, the timely posting of the reports of States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as of the Committee's concluding comments with regard to the consideration of those reports on the Division's web site. Information on the Optional Protocol to the Convention, its adoption by the General Assembly on 6 October and opening for signature on 10 December 1999 have also been posted on the web site. The Division sent briefing notes on the Committee's twentieth and twenty-first sessions, as well as the Committee's concluding comments, to the Office of the

High Commissioner for distribution to human rights mechanisms. It has continued to monitor the work of the human rights treaty bodies in integrating a gender perspective.

4. Cooperation between the Division and the Office of the High Commissioner has continued through the exchange of information on the communications procedures of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Director of the Division also met with staff of the Office of the High Commissioner in conjunction with the work of that Office to assess the communications procedures of the Commission on Human Rights.

5. The Division and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to support improved cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. Notably, they facilitated a teleconference between the bureaux of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights on 17 November 1999.

6. The Office of the High Commissioner participated in the activities organized by the Division at Headquarters on 10 December 1999, Human Rights Day, to mark the opening for signature of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. A joint message on the Optional Protocol and its significance for women was issued by the Special Adviser and the High Commissioner. The Director of the New York office of the Office of the High Commissioner participated in the signing ceremony, convened by the Office of Legal Affairs and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as well as in a press briefing. The High Commissioner also sent a message to the panel discussion moderated by the Special Adviser following the signing ceremony, at which the Secretary-General made an opening statement. Staff of the Office of the High Commissioner participated in the 1999 session of the open-ended working group of the Commission on the Status of Women during which negotiations on the optional protocol were successfully concluded.

7. The Division has continued to support the work of non-conventional human rights mechanisms. During 1999, the Division provided information to the special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights on the right to education and on violence against women, its causes and consequences. A first meeting has taken place between Division staff and the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on the human rights of migrants, at which modalities for the exchange of information were discussed. The information provided to the Special Rapporteur was gathered by the Division in conjunction with its work on violence against women migrant workers.

8. Coordination on report preparation has continued. In particular, the Office of the High Commissioner provided input to the Division for the preparation of the report requested under General Assembly resolution 52/97 of 12 December 1997 on violence against women migrant workers. The report was submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session (A/54/342) and the Assembly subsequently adopted resolution 54/138 of 17 December 1999 on this issue. In accordance with the joint work plan, the report is also to be submitted to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-sixth session. The Division and the Office of the High Commissioner have continued to exchange information on the question of trafficking in women and girls and have contributed to the study on the criminal aspects of trafficking in human beings, which is being prepared by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute on behalf of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

9. The Division, the Office of the High Commissioner and the United Nations Development Fund for Women jointly organized a workshop on gender integration into the human rights system. The workshop, which was a follow-up activity to an expert group meeting held in 1995 (see E/CN.4/1996/105), took place from 26 to 28 May 1999 at the United Nations Office at Geneva. Twelve special rapporteurs/representatives/experts and four chairpersons and one vice-chairperson of human rights treaty bodies participated in the workshop, as did representatives from several United Nations entities. The workshop was supported by two resource persons. In addition to the presentation of two background papers, the workshop reviewed three cross-cutting legal issues that were seen as being of major relevance in the sustained and systematic attention to women's human rights and gender issues in the general human rights framework and discussed four case studies prepared by experts at the invitation of the organizers.

10. The workshop adopted a series of recommendations aimed at drawing greater attention to

the human rights of women and to gender equality under general human rights instruments and mechanisms. The recommendations concern the work of country-specific and thematic mechanisms and human rights treaty bodies and also cover normative aspects and cooperation and coordination issues. The recommendations adopted by the workshop are presented in the annex to the present report.

III. Joint work plan for 2000

11. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will continue the targeted approach to joint activities that has been consolidated in the course of the implementation of the 1999 work plan. Major emphasis will be placed on supporting the work of human rights treaty bodies and selected special mechanisms and on cooperation between national machinery for the advancement of women and national human rights institutions. Particular efforts will be made to address constraints encountered in the implementation of ongoing and new activities, as well as activities carried over from the 1999 joint work plan.

12. Cooperation between the Division and the Office of the High Commissioner on the work of treaty bodies will continue during 2000. This will include the exchange of documents, reports and the results of the work of the treaty bodies as well as the regular circulation of these documents to the chairpersons and members of the treaty bodies. A particular effort will be made to eliminate remaining technical difficulties and complete the work on the electronic database covering all six treaty bodies with a view to making it fully operational and accessible for both the Division and the Office of the High Commissioner. The web sites of the Division (un.org/womenwatch/daw) and the Office of the High Commissioner (unhchr.ch) will be further improved to facilitate better communication. In order to address issues concerning the operation of the database, information exchange on the human rights of women and gender mainstreaming and Secretariat working methods in servicing the treaty bodies in a comprehensive manner, a meeting of the staff of all six treaty bodies will be convened in the second half of 2000. Other issues to be addressed during this first meeting will include a review of servicing implications for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women under the Optional Protocol and follow-up to relevant recommendations emanating from the gender integration workshop.

13. The Division will continue to monitor progress in the work of treaty bodies in integrating a gender perspective and will provide gender-specific input for their work. The Division will update the study on integrating a gender perspective into the work of the human rights treaty bodies (HRI/MC/1998/6) for consideration at the 13th meeting of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies. The Office of the High Commissioner will be supportive of an effective implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

14. The Division will provide targeted input for the work of non-conventional human rights mechanisms. During 2000, particular emphasis will be placed on supporting the work of the special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences and on the human rights of migrants, as well as the work of the experts of the Subcommission on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights on affirmative action and on reservations. Cooperation will continue in the exchange of information concerning communications submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as in the work of the Office of the High Commissioner on a review of the communications procedures of the Commission on Human Rights.

15. The Division and the Office of the High Commissioner will support and facilitate cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. This will include participation of chairpersons, as well as of senior staff of the Division and the Office of the High Commissioner, respectively, at Commission sessions, meetings of the bureaux, exchanges of information on working methods and on actions taken by both Commissions.

16. The Division and the Office of the High Commissioner will seek opportunities for cooperation between national machineries for the advancement of women and national human rights institutions. In order to identify common interests, concerns and strategies and to assess opportunities for cooperation between national machinery for the advancement of women and national human rights institutions, the Division and the Office will organize a workshop in the fall of 2000, at a

location to be determined, with the participation of representatives from some 10 national machineries for the advancement of women and 10 national human rights institutions (two from each of the five geographical regions of the United Nations). The workshop will elaborate recommendations to be brought to the attention of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights.

17. The Office of the High Commissioner will continue to seek the comments of the Division for the Advancement of Women on all training materials under production, with a view to ensuring adequate inclusion of issues related to the human rights of women and gender mainstreaming. The Office of the High Commissioner, in organizing training courses on reporting under human rights treaties, as well as other ad hoc activities, will continue to invite the participation of the Division. The Office will also continue to participate actively in selected meetings organized by the Division. The Division will contribute to, and participate in, selected meetings of human rights bodies, in particular the meeting of persons chairing treaty bodies and meetings organized by the Office of the High Commissioner. Both the Division and the Office will also continue to cooperate in the framework of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality of the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

Annex

Excerpt from the report of the workshop on gender integration into the human rights system, held at Geneva from 26 to 28 May 1999

I. Summary of the proceedings

1. The workshop on gender integration into the human rights system was convened in Geneva from 26 to 28 May 1999 by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). All special mechanisms and chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies were invited to participate in the workshop. Several resource persons, as well as representatives from the organizing entities and from other United Nations entities and bodies also participated.

2. The workshop was opened by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Mary Robinson. In welcoming the participants, she highlighted the priority she attached to the human rights of women and to gender concerns and emphasized the important role of the special mechanisms and treaty bodies in achieving the goal of women's full and equal enjoyment of all human rights. She expressed her appreciation for the cooperation and support among the three partner offices in preparing the workshop. Opening statements were also made by Ms. Jane Connors, Chief of the Women's Rights Unit of the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, and by Ms. Roxanna Carrillo, Human Rights Adviser, UNIFEM.

3. The workshop was organized as a follow-up to the 1995 expert group meeting on the development of guidelines for the integration of a gender perspective into United Nations human rights activities and programmes, co-sponsored by the (then) Centre for Human Rights and the Development Fund. The workshop was part of the joint work plan of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women for 1999, and proposed to build on work done in recent years with regard to increasing the attention paid to women's human rights and the integration of a gender perspective in the work of the human rights treaty bodies and special mechanisms. To that end, the workshop sought to assess progress made and obstacles encountered, to identify opportunities to focus more attention on gender issues and to develop strategies and recommendations for further action. It endeavoured to identify when, where and how experts had opportunities to integrate gender concerns into their work and when, how and what type of input experts should receive in the implementation of their mandates. The workshop set out to develop tools to allow human rights instruments and mechanisms to be applied in a way that took the systemic and systematic nature of discrimination against women more clearly into account.

4. The workshop benefited from the presentation of two background papers: one on trends regarding women's human rights and gender integration in the work of the human rights treaty bodies, prepared by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, and the other on special mechanisms, prepared by Professor Donna Sullivan, resource person. The workshop reviewed three cross-cutting legal issues that were seen as being of major relevance in the sustained and systematic attention to women's human rights and gender issues in the general human rights framework. These were: direct and indirect discrimination and the intersection of discrimination on the basis of sex with other forms of discrimination, presented by Ms. Florence Butegwa, resource person; culture and religion, presented by Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences; and State responsibility and non-State actors, presented by Professor Donna Sullivan.

5. Within this overall framework, the workshop greatly benefited from the presentation and discussion of four case studies prepared by experts at the invitation of the organizers.

6. A country-specific case study on the Islamic Republic of Iran was presented by Mr. Maurice Copithorne. Noting that he had been the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1995, he discussed his approach to his mandate as it pertains to the situation of women, developments in the situation of women in

the country and constraints in reflecting women-specific and gender concerns in his reports.

7. A thematic case study was presented by Professor Fantu Cheru, independent expert of the Commission on Human Rights on structural adjustment policies. Having submitted his first report under this new mandate to the Commission on Human Rights in 1999 (E/CN.4/1999/50), he discussed some of the conceptual and methodological problems in introducing gender analysis in structural adjustment programmes.

8. Two case studies were presented by chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies. Professor Virginia Bonoan-Dandan, Chairperson of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, discussed the gender implications of the right to work under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, with particular reference to articles 6 and 7, whereby she commented on how failure to protect women's right to work can also lead to violations of their other rights.

9. Professor Cecilia Medina-Quiroga, Chairperson of the Human Rights Committee, reviewed the evolving understanding of the right to life protected under article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in the Committee's practice, taking into account the particular types of threats women face in the enjoyment of this right.

10. Presentations were also made by representatives of other United Nations entities (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO)), who described their current cooperation with, and support provided to, human rights treaty bodies and special mechanisms with regard to women's human rights and gender issues.

11. Following these presentations in plenary session, workshop participants met in two working groups. Working group one was composed of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies and representatives of United Nations entities. Working group two was composed of special rapporteurs/independent experts of the Commission on Human Rights and of representatives of United Nations entities. Both were assisted by resource persons. Discussions covered a wide range of issues, whereby sources of information available to independent experts, particularities of mandates and issues of normative clarity and consistency as well as cooperation and coordination were identified as areas where further progress needed to be made to achieve the goals set at United Nations conferences, such as the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna,1993) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Bejing,1995), and reiterated in resolutions of the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women. The discussion also pointed to the importance of the political and cultural environment within which women pursue the full enjoyment of their human rights and of the institutional framework and capacity to ensure respect for and protection, promotion and fulfilment of women's human rights. The accountability of various actors for progress on women's human rights within each actor's particular role and mandate was also highlighted. The recommendations prepared by the two working groups and by the working group of the whole were adopted in plenary session.

12. In its discussion, the workshop was guided by agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Economic and Social Council on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system and, in particular, the Council's definition of gender mainstreaming:

> "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality" (A/52/3, chap. IV, para. 4).

13. The workshop was also guided by the following description of gender:

> The term "gender" refers to the socially constructed roles played by women and men that are ascribed to them on the basis of their sex, in public and in private life. The term "sex" refers to the biological and physical characteristics of

women and men. Gender roles are contingent on a particular socio-economic, political and cultural context, and are affected by other factors, including age, race, class, or ethnicity. Gender roles are learned, and vary widely within and between cultures. As social constructs, they can change. Gender roles shape women's access to rights, resources and opportunities (HRI/MC/1998/6, para. 16, see also A/51/322, paras. 7-15).

II. Recommendations adopted by the workshop

A. Working group on country-specific and thematic mechanisms

Summary of discussion

14. The working group discussed sources of information and methods of work to identify opportunities for further integration of women's human rights in the work of country-specific and thematic mechanisms.

15. It was noted that the terms of reference of the mandate guided the sources of information, as well as the type of available and relevant information. Global mandates, such as those on the sale of children or on racism, required information that was different from country-specific mandates. A number of mandates focused more specifically on individual cases of violations. Information concerning such cases could arise from a variety of sources, most commonly from domestic and from international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Cases reported in the news media were also sometimes monitored for possible follow-up. Information for analytical reports on trends or on a particular topic was drawn from a broader range of sources of information, including academic institutions, United Nations sources, personal networks or conferences. Some of the new mandates had complexities that required different analytical approaches, as well as different types of information. For example, in order to bring human rights considerations to bear on macroeconomic issues, new forms of dialogue needed to be established to achieve change in policy approaches.

16. It was noted that much of the general, as opposed to case-specific, information was not disaggregated by sex. The lack of support for the mechanisms that analyse available information for its gender implications was also noted. Since the request for the inclusion of the gender perspective in the work of most special mechanisms was of a relatively recent nature, that is, in the aftermath of the Vienna and Beijing Conferences, this dimension had not been properly integrated into the understanding of the mandates and relevant information was in many instances not forthcoming.

17. Women's NGOs were seen to be central sources of gender-specific information at present, but there was no systematic flow of such information nor was it provided to all special mechanisms. Likewise, there were geographical gaps in information, with very little or no information coming from certain countries or regions. The need for international and national NGOs to provide information on women's human rights was emphasized.

Recommendations

18. To facilitate the further integration of women's human rights and gender analysis into the work of the special mechanisms, the working group made the following recommendations with regard to sources of information and methods of work:

Sources of information:

(a) Special rapporteurs, special representatives, independent experts and working groups should note in the reports of their annual meeting that the special mechanisms welcome the inclusion in relevant resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights language regarding:

(i) The continued need for data disaggregated by sex and analysed for gender implications to be provided by all sources of information, including Governments, intergovernmental bodies and NGOs;

(ii) Specific women's human rights themes and/or concerns, including, as appropriate, directions in which the mandate might be developed with regard to women's human rights;

(b) Special mechanisms should direct requests for information regarding the human rights of women to specific government ministries with responsibility for, or expertise on, issues related to women and/or to

national machineries for the advancement of women, as well as to ministries of justice and other branches within government;

(c) Questionnaires to governments should include requests for data disaggregated by sex and, as appropriate, detailed information on national laws affecting women's human rights;

(d) The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in cooperation with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women and United Nations Development Fund for Women, should establish and update regularly an electronic database providing:

(i) Information from the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women on contact information for national machinery for the advancement of women and national action plans for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action;

(ii) Information on United Nations field presences in all countries, including contact information for United Nations personnel with responsibility for programming related to women;

(iii) Information on national academic institutions with major programmes on issues relevant to women's human rights and gender studies;

(iv) Information on NGOs working in areas relevant to women's human rights, including women's human rights groups, organizations that provide support services to women, development organizations, professional groups such as associations of women lawyers and judges or health-care professionals, and trade unions, and that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights identify links to existing databases with such information;

(e) The special mechanisms should:

(i) Include in their reports to the Commission on Human Rights a request to NGOs to provide data disaggregated by sex and analysed for gender implications in their submissions and communications;

(ii) Request data disaggregated by sex and analysed for gender implications in submissions and communications and, as appropriate, in information on specific situations or concerns related to women's human rights in informal contacts with NGOs, particularly international and national human rights organizations;

(f) The special mechanisms should request academic institutions to prepare and/or to make available existing studies that will assist their efforts to further develop legal and conceptual frameworks for addressing women's human rights and applying a gender analysis, including comparative law studies;

(g) United Nations field offices should transmit information that is made available to them regarding individual cases and situations of violations of women's human rights, as well as information on thematic aspects of women's human rights to the special mechanisms;

(h) The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should track standard-setting initiatives under way in the United Nations system, in order to ensure that special mechanisms are informed about such initiatives and can offer input on general and gender-specific human rights concerns that should be taken into account in the standard-setting process;

(i) The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should, in cooperation with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, provide the following information to the special mechanisms on a regular basis:

(i) Reports by States Parties submitted under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in connection with on-site visits by special mechanisms and concerns identified by the special mechanisms regarding the situation of women's human rights in specific countries;

(ii) Concluding comments by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in connection with on-site visits by special mechanisms and concerns identified by the special mechanisms regarding the situation of women's human rights in specific countries;

(iii) Information developed by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM, UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF and

other sources in the United Nations system on thematic aspects of women's human rights;

(j) Special mechanisms should provide feedback to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on their activities, as appropriate;

(k) The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should invite officials of the World Bank to establish a process of dialogue involving special mechanisms, representatives of treaty bodies, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on a series of thematic issues, including issues related to women's human rights as a matter of priority, with the aim of extending the dialogue to include country situations in the future;

Methods of work:

(l) Reports by special mechanisms should include, as appropriate, a separate section that addresses the human rights of women, including major trends with regard to violations and the realization of rights, and also integrate information on individual cases and patterns of violations into other sections of reports as appropriate, bearing in mind that the most effective method of presenting information in reports should be continuously re-evaluated and adapted as necessary;

(m) Information on gender-specific patterns in the realization of all human rights and the situation of women's human rights should be integrated into the conclusions presented in reports to the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly;

(n) Recommendations on gender-specific dimensions of human rights and on women's human rights issues should be identified and integrated into recommendations presented in reports to the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly;

(o) Reports should include, in instances where data disaggregated by sex is not available and therefore not presented, an explicit statement to that effect;

(p) References to economic, social and cultural rights in general and specifically in relation to women should be framed in rights-based language to draw attention to international legal obligations related to questions such as food, housing, education and health, including reproductive health;

(q) On-site visits should be identified by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the special mechanisms as a priority focus for efforts by the special mechanisms to integrate women's human rights and gender analysis;

(r) An expert seminar should be convened to:

(i) Examine existing protocols for documenting violations of women's human rights, including protocols developed by NGOs and United Nations sources;

(ii) Assess the need for more standardized approaches, with particular attention to the issues of victim and witness security and confidentiality, and sexual violence;

(s) Special mechanisms whose mandates have a developed focus on gender analysis and/or women's human rights, such as the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences and the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, should be provided with the opportunity to carry out joint missions;

(t) The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in collaboration with United Nations field agencies, should coordinate access by the special mechanisms to women's groups, relevant national officials and human rights groups working on women's human rights in the context of on-site missions;

(u) Progress towards the realization of women's human rights should be promoted and monitored over time, through:

(i) Follow-up to relevant recommendations by the special mechanisms;

(ii) Identification of common benchmarks on women's human rights in specific country situations to guide all United Nations activities, including those of development programmes and funds (including in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework) and humanitarian assistance programmes;

(iii) A report compiling the information and allegations in reports by all special mechanisms regarding violations of women's human rights to be prepared annually for the Commission on Human Rights and transmitted to the Commission on the Status of Women;

(v) The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the special mechanisms should give priority to efforts to integrate women's human rights and gender analysis in country situations where there is a significant United Nations field presence, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, for example, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the World Food Programme (WFP).

B. Working group on treaty bodies

Summary of discussion

19. The working group, consisting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies, considered the two topics of sources of information and working methods to identify opportunities for integrating the gender perspective into their work. It was emphasized that the work of the treaty bodies, generally, and, with regard to integration of the gender perspective in particular, was compromised by financial and human resource constraints.

20. It was noted that treaty bodies take into account similar categories of information in pursuing their mandates. These include the reports of States parties, reports or oral information provided by the specialized agencies and the funds and programmes of the United Nations, "country analyses" of the Secretariat, information provided by the relevant Committee's country rapporteur, the concluding observations of other treaty bodies and information provided in written or oral form from NGOs. The information may be country-specific or relate to themes relevant to the treaty. Members of several of the treaty bodies participate in on-site visits.

21. It was noted, however, that information was not received on a systematized basis and that institutional mechanisms had not been developed, particularly within the United Nations system, to ensure that the treaty bodies received all relevant available information. Information relating to the enjoyment of rights by women and girls was not usually received, although several committees received this information from NGOs whose work was gender-focused. Information committees received was rarely analysed from a gender perspective. In addition, information on the implementation of recommendations in concluding observations or with respect to the follow-up to consideration of reports of States parties by committees was rarely available. Crucial information for treaty bodies, such as the legal framework of individual States parties, was usually not made available to treaty bodies. Unlike the situation of a number of non-conventional mechanisms, treaty bodies had not developed guidelines for the format of submissions of information from NGOs and entities of the United Nations system.

22. Treaty bodies have also adopted similar working methods. Guidelines for the preparation of the reports of States Parties have been formulated and the reports are reviewed through a system of constructive dialogue, with a majority of the committees designating a rapporteur to take the lead in the review of the report. The majority of treaty bodies convene a pre-session working group to prepare lists of issues and questions that are submitted to those States parties whose reports are under review. Several of the treaty bodies convene these meetings in advance so that States parties can submit answers in writing prior to the session at which their reports will be reviewed. All treaty bodies formulate concluding observations/comments containing concrete recommendations to States Parties based on their review of their reports.

23. Most treaty bodies formulate general comments/recommendations that elaborate the meaning of individual rights or cross-cutting themes in a particular treaty. Several of these canvass information from entities of the United Nations system and NGOs to assist in the preparation of general comments/recommendations. A number have individual communications procedures. Several have adopted procedures to consider the implementation of the treaty in States Parties whose reports are significantly overdue. Several also invite States Parties to present "exceptional" reports if the situation in the particular State is considered to be grave or in urgent circumstances. One treaty body, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, has adopted an "early warning" procedure. One treaty body designates individual members to prepare studies on aspects of the subject of the treaty, while the Committee against Torture has an investigation mechanism, which empowers it to inquire into serious and systematic violations of the treaty.

Recommendations

24. To facilitate the further integration of a gender perspective into the work of the treaty bodies, the working group recommended that:

(a) Bearing in mind their mandates, treaty bodies should consider the impact of gender on the enjoyment of rights guaranteed in individual treaties; the relevance of gender should be considered in the formulation of lists of issues and questions on States parties' reports, during constructive dialogue and in the formulation of concluding observations/comments;

(b) Bearing in mind their mandates, treaty bodies should make explicit commitments to integrating the gender perspective in their work;

(c) The gender perspective should be integrated in general recommendations/comments, as well as in the formulation of joint general comments/ recommendations incorporating a gender perspective;

(d) Regular joint meetings should be held between members of treaty bodies on integrating a gender perspective in cross-cutting or thematic human rights issues and specific treaty rights;

(e) The gender perspective should be integrated in all studies and special procedures of treaty bodies, including "early warning" mechanisms, investigations and the review of reports on an exceptional basis should be made;

(f) The gender perspective should be integrated in all on-site visits by treaty body members;

(g) "Good practices" and "lessons learned" in the implementation of women's human rights based on the review of States parties reports should be collected;

(h) A focal point on gender should be designated by each treaty body;

(i) Coordination and cooperation should be established between treaty bodies in the formulation of general comments/recommendations, including through the convening of cross-committee working groups;

(j) Joint working groups should be established among members from different Committees to consider and develop the gender implications of particular rights and issues under the various treaties; special rapporteurs/representatives on thematic issues should also be invited to participate in such working groups;

(k) Measures to ensure consistency in recommendations in concluding observations/comments should be developed;

(l) The meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies should hold a biennial review of progress in integrating a gender perspective into treaty body work;

(m) Regular meetings should be held between treaty bodies and United Nations entities to identify gaps in information collection and explore different ways of collecting and sharing gender-sensitive information;

(n) A centralized database of country-specific legal frameworks, including the national constitutions, criminal codes, family codes, organized by region, should be developed;

(o) Treaty bodies should call on their secretariats to commission studies that would contribute to the clarification of the gender dimensions of rights;

(p) Guidelines should be adopted by treaty bodies for the format and content of reports from the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations; such guidelines should emphasize the importance of gender analysis and the inclusion of sex-disaggregated data;

(q) United Nations entities should adopt a common gender-sensitive framework for country specific input into the work of the treaty bodies;

(r) United Nations entities, including those with field operations, should be encouraged to monitor and report on the implementation of recommendations in concluding observations/recommendations, particularly in regard to gender issues;

(s) United Nations entities should develop a centralized database, including, *inter alia*, the reports of States parties, consideration by treaty bodies, concluding comments/observations and the results of field investigations, on a country-by-country basis; country-specific gender analysis of these data should be conducted;

(t) Non-governmental organizations which are concerned with gender issues should be encouraged to provide information to all treaty bodies monitoring the mandate of a particular treaty; and should also monitor

implementation of relevant recommendations in concluding observations/comments;

(u) Interns and volunteers should be recruited to prepare gender analysis on specific treaty rights.

C. Working group on normative clarification and issues of cooperation and coordination

Summary of discussion

25. Participants met in a working group of the whole to consider the two topics of normative clarification and issues of cooperation and coordination. It was emphasized that the United Nations system is perceived by the general public as constituting one system rather than separate entities. The importance of moving from monitoring to implementation of human rights at the national level was also underlined.

26. The working group addressed the content of rights and their clarification from a gender perspective. Attention was drawn to the traditional meaning attributed to rights and the need for a critical analysis in order to capture women's life experiences, as well as experiences of violations of rights. The interrelationship of all human rights and the interconnection of violations of particular rights with enjoyment of other human rights was emphasized. It was noted that normative clarification had two interrelated aspects: legal analysis; and the gathering of factual information on the situation of women. In many instances, a broadened reading of the substantive content of human rights guarantees was required to bring experiences of women within the definition of human rights and the reach of the human rights framework. Gender analysis is a tool for more precise interpretation of the normative content of rights. Such precision leads to the design of better procedures for implementation at the national level, as well as proper support from the international system so that human rights are enjoyed by all.

27. Principal themes in the discussion in the working group were the capacity of academic institutions, NGOs and other bodies of civil society, including religious bodies, to provide information and research support to human rights mechanisms, including legal expertise. Not only did such institutions have much to offer to the promotion of human rights, but contacts between them allow for a human rights perspective to be mainstreamed outside the international human rights framework. Contacts with such institutions also promote a culture of gender-sensitive human rights and human rights education. Academic and other institutions can push the theoretical boundaries of human rights law and provide information to human rights mechanisms, including through research and analysis and the conduct of surveys. They can also be catalysts for legal change at the national level and provide insights to human rights mechanisms on prevailing national perceptions of the meaning of human rights.

28. It was noted that the human rights mechanisms already relied to some extent on research and analysis from national academic institutions, NGOs and other entities of civil society. However, this was on an ad hoc basis and largely depended on the knowledge and networks of the individual mechanism concerned. In addition, it was noted that the level of support for mechanisms from such institutions was variable. It was emphasized that the support and assistance of research institutions, as well as of interns, could be more useful with regard to certain aspects of mandates and might be inapplicable to others.

29. The value of incorporating interns and volunteers in the human rights support system was underlined. However, it was noted that interns must be drawn from all regions of the world and their work assignments needed to be carefully adapted to their skills and needs.

Recommendations

30. To facilitate the further integration of a gender perspective into the work of human rights mechanisms the working group of the whole recommended that the mechanisms:

(a) Foster contacts with academic institutions, think tanks, other research institutions, national human rights institutions and national machinery for the advancement of women to promote the development of information exchange and projects aimed at normative clarification, as well as a systematic approach for support to human rights mechanisms;

(b) Develop a directory of such institutions and their ongoing projects and identify individual scholars and their research interests and projects of particular relevance to mandates of human rights mechanisms;

(c) Encourage academic institutions to incorporate human rights and gender studies into their curricula and research;

(d) Design broad-based internship placement and training schemes within the United Nations human rights programmes, including at the field level; particular emphasis should be placed on creating opportunities, including through scholarships, for students and young scholars from developing countries to participate in such programmes;

(e) Institutionalize links between treaty bodies and rapporteurs, in particular through the facilitation of attendance by representatives of the special mechanisms at sessions of treaty bodies, in order to provide opportunities for joint discussions of themes of common interest and joint meetings;

(f) Encourage the circulation of draft general comments/recommendations of treaty bodies among treaty body experts and rapporteurs to elicit their opinions; and to seek expert input from the specialized agencies of the United Nations system in areas within their mandate, as well as from academic institutions;

(g) Commission studies on cross-cutting legal issues of relevance to women's enjoyment of human rights and gender factors, such as: State responsibility for non-State action; religious extremism; the intersection of discrimination on the basis of sex with other forms of discrimination; and specific issues such as reproductive rights;

(h) Ensure routine and regular dissemination of the recommendations of treaty bodies and Charter-based mechanisms to United Nations country offices;

(i) Ensure that, where on-site visits are conducted by special rapporteurs and/or treaty bodies, information is provided on available resources concerning women's human rights, including contacts with local United Nations representatives, particularly their gender experts and gender focal points;

(j) Elaborate guidelines specific to each treaty body and Charter-based mechanism on the integration of the gender perspective into their work;

(k) Convene regular meetings for focused discussion on, and elaboration of, the normative content of human rights in the context of gender analysis;

(l) Ensure coordination between the United Nations human rights activities, activities regarding the advancement of women and women's human rights, and other parts of the Secretariat, in particular the Centre for International Crime Prevention;

(m) Mandate the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Division for the Advancement of Women and UNIFEM to compile the recommendations of the 1995 workshop, the series of United Nations world conferences and other relevant events, to assess their implementation and prepare a report thereon;

(n) Convene a follow-up meeting to assess the implementation of the recommendations of the workshop.